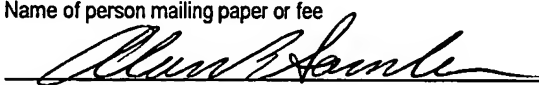


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

INVENTION : SHARP SHOOTER BASKETBALL APPARATUS

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

Express Mailing Number: <u>EL 887732771 US</u>
Date of Deposit: <u>APRIL 15, 2004</u>
I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Address" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Mail Stop Patent Application, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.
Alan B. Samlan, Reg. No.: 28,470
Name of person mailing paper or fee

(Signature)

I. RELATED PATENT APPLICATION

This patent application is a divisional of prior U.S. Patent Application, Serial Number 10/131,811, filed April 25, 2002, still pending.

II. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to basketball apparatus and, more particularly, to a basketball apparatus that teaches basketball players to improve their shooting accuracy when shooting backboard shots from any location on the basketball court.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

In the game of basketball, the coaches spend a great deal of time contemplating the talents and dichotomy of the players to assemble a good team, game plans specifically tailored toward capitalizing on the strengths of these players, and strategies to execute these game plans depending upon the opponent. All this effort is exerted to produce a winning team.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 2

1 However, this effort becomes futile and, winning impossible, if the players do not execute
2 their shots with accuracy and, thereby, score points for the team.

3 A good basketball player will spend, either under his or her own initiative or under the
4 coach's direction, a great deal of time practicing shooting. During practicing, the player will
5 repeatedly shoot from the same location on the basketball court until he or she begin to
6 continually make the shot from this location. The player may shoot the basketball directly
7 into the basketball hoop or shoot the basketball to an area on the backboard such that the
8 basketball will bank off the backboard into the basketball hoop. In either instance, the
9 basketball player will shoot the shot from this location until the player is comfortable with the
10 amount of energy to initiate the shot and is assured of the trajectory and aim that will achieve
11 a successful shot. In fact, U.S. Patent 3,825,257 to Palmer entitled "Apparatus For Practicing
12 Basketball Throws" is an apparatus that a basketball player can use to practice this same
13 shooting technique when the player is unable to do so on the actual basketball court. The
14 problem with this practicing philosophy and the patent is that there is no discernable method,
15 other than by trial and error, by which to train a player to shoot a successful shot from this
16 location or from any other location on the basketball court. Regardless of the location on the
17 basketball court, there are an infinite number of trajectories and speeds that the basketball may
18 travel to make a basketball shot. For each location, this trajectory and speed of the basketball
19 may be directed straight into the basketball hoop or bounced off the backboard into the
20 basketball hoop. For basketball shots bounced off the backboard, there is a correct location

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 3

1 on the backboard which will produce a perfect, successful shot given each location, trajectory,
2 and speed. With any variation from that correct location on the backboard, the shot will not
3 be a perfect shot but may or may not be a success if: (1) the basketball barely missed hitting
4 the basketball rim and entered the basketball hoop to score points, or (2) the basketball hit
5 the basketball rim and entered into the basketball hoop to score points, or (3) the basketball
6 hit the basketball rim and did not enter into the basketball hoop, thereby, not scoring points,
7 or (4) the shot may completely miss the basketball hoop altogether, resulting in what is
8 commonly termed an "air ball" shot. Thus, there is a need and there has never been disclosed
9 a target bulls eye which will eliminate the guessing associated with making successful
10 backboard basketball shots from anywhere on the basketball court.

11 **IV. OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION**

12 It is the primary object of the present invention to provide a basketball apparatus that
13 teaches basketball players to improve their shooting accuracy when shooting backboard shots.
14 A related object of the present invention is to teach basketball players this improvement of
15 shooting accuracy from any location on the basketball court.

16 Another object of the present invention is to provide a basketball apparatus that is
17 equally useful for basketball players of all heights.

18 Another object of the present invention is to provide a basketball apparatus that is
19 light weight and portable.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 4

1 Still another related object of the present invention is to provide a quality basketball
2 apparatus that is inexpensive to manufacture.

3 Another object of the invention is to provide a basketball apparatus that is safe and
4 easy to use.

5 Other objects of the present invention will become more apparent to persons having
6 ordinary skill in the art to which the present invention pertains from the following description
7 taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

8 **V. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

9 The present invention is a basketball apparatus that provides a target bulls eye to teach
10 basketball players to make the perfect basketball shot when shooting backboard shots from
11 any location on the basketball court. The basketball apparatus consists of a backboard, a
12 basketball hoop and a supporting bracket located in front of the backboard, and a target bulls
13 eye located behind the backboard. The target bulls eye consists of a contrasting top portion
14 and bottom portion to isolate a centerpoint. Upon shooting, if the user aims towards the
15 centerpoint and shoots the basketball in the proper trajectory to engage the centerpoint, the
16 basketball, on this trajectory toward the centerpoint, would engage the backboard at a perfect
17 reflection point and, thereby, bounce off the backboard towards the basketball hoop to obtain
18 the perfect basketball shot.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 5

1 **VI. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

2 The Description of the Preferred Embodiment will be better understood with reference
3 to the following figures:

4 Figure 1 is a perspective view of the basketball apparatus.

5 Figure 2 is a perspective view, with portions removed, illustrating the target bulls eye
6 with respect to the basketball apparatus.

7 Figure 2a is a perspective view, with portions removed, illustrating an alternate
8 embodiment of the target bulls eye with respect to the basketball apparatus.

9 Figure 3 is a top plan view, with portions removed, illustrating the location of the
10 centerpoint of the target bulls eye on the basketball apparatus.

11 Figure 4 is a top plan view, with portions removed, illustrating the use of the target
12 bulls eye in relation to the trajectory of a basketball shot with respect to the basketball
13 apparatus.

14 Figure 5 is a front elevation view, with portions removed, illustrating the use of the
15 target bulls eye in relation to the trajectory of a basketball shot with respect to the basketball
16 apparatus.

17 Figure 6 is a side view, with portions removed, illustrating the use of the target bulls
18 eye in relation to the trajectory of a basketball shot with respect to the basketball apparatus.

19 Figure 7 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the basketball apparatus.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 6

1 Figure 8 is an enlarged perspective view, with portions removed, illustrating the
2 alternate embodiment of the reflective target bulls eye with respect to the basketball
3 apparatus.

4 Figure 9 is a bottom view of the L-shaped member used in the alternate embodiment
5 illustrating the sections that form the reflective target bulls eye.

6 Figure 10 is an enlarged perspective view, with portions removed, of the alternate
7 embodiment illustrating the guide template to place the L-shaped member into proper
8 position.

9 Figure 11 is a top planar view of the L-shaped member used in the alternate
10 embodiment illustrating the sticky substance or bonding agents to adhere the L-shaped
11 member in proper position to achieve the reflective target bulls eye.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 7

VII. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Turning first to Figure 1, there is illustrated a basketball apparatus 20. The basketball apparatus 20 has a backboard 22. As illustrated in a non-limiting example, the backboard 22 is rectangular in shape. Alternatively, the backboard 22 could be any other shape including but not limited to, oval, pentagon, hexagon, etc... provided that the shape continues to act as a backboard for the basketball apparatus 20 in the manner discussed below. In the preferred embodiment, the backboard 22 is made of a durable, transparent glass or clear acrylic or plastic. Alternatively, in an alternate embodiment, the backboard 22 can be made of non-transparent material. The backboard 22 has a top 24, bottom 26, sides 28, front 30, and back 32 (Figure 2). Situated along the bottom 26 and the sides 28 is a cover 34. Preferably, the cover 34 is made of a durable rubber to prevent a basketball player from being injured on the backboard 22.

Centered along the bottom 26 of the backboard 22 is a basketball hoop 36. The basketball hoop 36 consists of a basketball rim 38, a basketball net 40, a supporting bracket 42, and a rim support 44. In the preferred embodiment, the basketball rim 38 is positioned perpendicular to the backboard 22. The use of the basketball net 40 is threefold: (1) to catch the basketball that enters through the basketball rim 38; (2) to aid as a signal that points have been scored by the offensive team; and (3) prevent injury to basketball players under the basketball hoop 36 who are in the path of the basketball after it exits the basketball hoop 36. The supporting bracket 42 is an L-shaped bracket with two bracket sides 46a and 46b. The

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 8

1 bracket side 46a of the bracket 42 is connected to the basketball rim 38 and is perpendicular
2 to the backboard 22. Preferably, the bracket side 46a is integrally molded to the basketball
3 rim 38. In this manner, the basketball hoop 36 becomes a stronger unit which is able to
4 withstand the additional torque forces that may be exerted by basketball players. The rim
5 support 44 also coacts to provide additional strength to the basketball hoop 36 through direct
6 support of the basketball rim 38. The bracket side 46b of the bracket 42 is attached to the
7 backboard 22 in a parallel relationship. The bracket 42 may be attached directly to the
8 backboard 22 or, preferably, attached to a plate 52 (Figure 2). Situated between the bracket
9 side 46b and the plate 52 is a panel 54 (Figure 1). In the preferred embodiment, the panel 54
10 is made of a durable, transparent material such as glass, clear acrylic, or plastic. Alternatively,
11 the panel 54 may be made of any other type of material provided that the material is
12 transparent. The bracket side 46b of the bracket 42 is attached to the backboard 22 by screws
13 48 (Figure 2) and bolts 50 (Figure 2). In this manner, the integrity of the backboard 22 may
14 be preserved while maintaining the basketball hoop 36 in its proper position relative to the
15 backboard 22. In addition to the cover 34, a safety pad 56 is also situated along the bottom
16 of the panel 54 to likewise prevent injury to the basketball players. Located adjacent to the
17 back 32 of the backboard 22 is a target bulls eye 58.

18 Turning to Figure 2, the target bulls eye 58 is more clearly illustrated. In the preferred
19 embodiment, the target bulls eye 58 is an elongated, cylindrical member with a top portion
20 60 and a bottom portion 62. Preferably, the target bulls eye 58 is made of a metal material.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 9

1 Alternatively, the target bulls eye 58 may be made of any other type of material including but
2 not limited to durable plastics, plexi-glass, rubber, or any other material provided that the
3 material is strong enough to withstand normal use. As an example, normal use would include
4 the target bulls eye 58 withstanding direct contact from the basketball. The top portion 60
5 and the bottom portion 62 are connected at a centerpoint 64. The top portion 60 has a length
6 66a and the bottom portion 62 has a length 66b. In the preferred embodiment, the length 66a
7 of the top portion 60 is equal to the length 66b of the bottom portion 62, each being
8 approximately four inches (4") in length. In the preferred embodiment, the entire length 66a
9 of the top portion 60 is white in color and the entire length 66b of the bottom portion 62 is
10 red in color. The reason for the contrasting color is to enable the basketball player to isolate
11 the centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58 when shooting and as further explained below.
12 The inventor has found that the contrasting colors of white on red provides the best means
13 for the basketball player to visually locate the centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58.
14 Alternatively, any other contrasting colors may be used provided the basketball player is able
15 to physically locate the centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58.

16 Although the target bulls eye 58 is illustrated as an elongated, cylindrical member, it
17 can be replaced with any other form including but not limited to a cube, pyramid, rectangular
18 solid, triangle, and/or a sphere as illustrated in Figure 2a. As long as the target bulls eye 58
19 is a visually perceivable target, it is acceptable.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 10

1 The target bulls eye 58 is connected to the plate 52 by a brace 68. In the preferred
2 embodiment, the brace 68 is V-shaped with two members 70a and 70b. The brace 68 is
3 preferably made of plastic. Members 70a and 70b combine to form a single end for
4 attachment to the target bulls eye 58. In the preferred embodiment, the target bulls eye 58
5 is integrally molded to the brace 68. Alternatively, any other means to attach the target bulls
6 eye 58 to the brace 68 is acceptable provided the attachment secures the target bulls eye 58
7 in the desired position. Each member 70a and 70b is connected to the plate 52 by extensions
8 72a and 72b, respectively. The extensions 72a and 72b each have a channel 74 to receive the
9 screw 48 such that, upon tightening of the bolt 50 about the screw 48, the extensions 72a and
10 72b are secured against the plate 52. In the preferred embodiment, the brace 68 extends
11 outwardly from the plate 52 at a ninety degree angle (90°) or perpendicular to the plate 52.
12 In this manner, the brace 68 has a brace top surface 76 which is in the same horizontal plane
13 as the bracket side 46a of the supporting bracket 42. In the preferred embodiment, the target
14 bulls eye 58 is attached to the brace 68 at a ninety degree angle (90°) or perpendicular to the
15 brace 68 and the centerpoint 64 is in the same horizontal plane as the brace top surface 76.
16 Since the target bulls eye 58 is perpendicular to the brace 68, the target bulls eye 58 also
17 remains parallel to the backboard 22 and the plate 52. The purpose for this relationship
18 between the target bulls eye 58, the brace 68, the plate 52, and the supporting bracket 42 is
19 to align the centerpoint 64 in the same horizontal plane as the basketball rim 38 of the
20 basketball hoop 36.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 11

1 With the structure of the basketball apparatus 20 previously identified, the theory
2 behind this invention should be explained next. Typically, when shooting a backboard shot,
3 the basketball player will focus on the basketball hoop 36 and visually estimate, from the
4 basketball hoop 36, where the basketball should contact the backboard 22 to make a
5 successful backboard shot. When the basketball player locates that position on the backboard
6 22, the basketball player will shoot the basketball along any particular trajectory and speed
7 toward that position on the backboard 22. If the basketball player is accurate, the basketball
8 will engage the backboard 22 at the desired position. When the basketball engages the
9 backboard 22, it will be at a particular angle of incidence to the backboard 22. As the
10 backboard 22 is a stable, non-moving surface, the basketball will bounce off or reflect from
11 the backboard 22 at an angle of reflection which is the same as the angle of incidence that it
12 engaged the backboard 22. This position on the backboard 22 is referred to as a perfect
13 reflection point 96. The basketball will bounce or reflect at this angle of reflection and send
14 the basketball directly into the basketball hoop 36 for a successful backboard shot.

15 In Applicant's invention, the basketball player neither focuses on the basketball hoop
16 36 nor estimates a position on the backboard 22 to shoot the basketball. Rather, the
17 basketball player focuses solely on the target bulls eye 58 and, specifically, looks for the
18 centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58. Upon isolating the centerpoint 64, the basketball
19 player shoots the basketball along any particular trajectory and speed toward the centerpoint
20 64. If the backboard 22 did not exist, the basketball would continue forward along that

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 12

1 trajectory and directly hit the centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58. Since the backboard
2 22 does exist, the basketball will engage the backboard 22 and then bounce off the backboard
3 22, as described above, into the basketball hoop 36. Thus, in Applicant's invention, the
4 basketball player may disregard the basketball hoop 36 and the backboard 22 completely and,
5 instead, rely solely upon the target bulls eye 58 and the centerpoint 64 to shoot his or her
6 successful backboard shots. Also, the use of the target bulls eye 58 in this manner is effective
7 from any position on the basketball court. Since the basketball player must isolate the
8 centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58 to successfully shoot backboard shots, the physical
9 location of the centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58 with respect to the backboard 22 is
10 essential to this invention.

11 Referring to Figure 3, the location of the target bulls eye 58 and the centerpoint 64
12 are more fully illustrated. The backboard 22 is situated at a supporting bracket length 78
13 from the basketball hoop 36. The supporting bracket length 78 of a typical supporting
14 bracket 42 is approximately five inches (5"). The basketball rim 38 has a radius 80 to a
15 basketball rim center 82. A typical basketball rim 38 has a radius 80 of approximately nine
16 inches (9"). The distance from the front 30 of the backboard 22 to the basketball rim center
17 82 is the total of the supporting bracket length 78 (i.e., five inches) and the radius 80 (i.e.,
18 nine inches) which totals approximately fourteen inches (14"). Assume that located on the
19 opposite side of the backboard 22 is a virtual supporting bracket 84 (shown by the phantom
20 line) and a virtual basketball hoop 86 (shown by the phantom line). Also assume that the

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 13

1 virtual supporting bracket 84 has the same length as the supporting bracket length 78 and that
2 the virtual basketball hoop 86 has the same radius as the radius 80. A virtual basketball rim
3 center 88 would, thus, also be located a rim center distance 91 of fourteen inches (14") from
4 the back 32 of the backboard 22.

5 Given the basketball hoop 38, in the front 30 of the backboard 22, and the virtual
6 basketball hoop 86, in the back 32 of the backboard 22, if a basketball player shoots a
7 basketball toward the front 30 of the backboard 22, the basketball will engage the backboard
8 22 at some location along the backboard 22. If the basketball is traveling along trajectory A
9 and the backboard 22 does not exist, the basketball will continue along trajectory A and enter
10 the virtual basketball hoop 86 directly at the virtual basketball rim center 88. Since the
11 backboard 22 does exist, the basketball will engage the backboard 22 at an angle of incidence
12 154. As the basketball will bounce off or reflect from the backboard 22 at an angle of
13 reflection 156 which is equal and opposite to the angle of incidence 154, the basketball will
14 travel along trajectory B and enter the basketball hoop 36 directly at the basketball rim center
15 82. This type of backboard shot is referred to as the "perfect basketball shot". Depending
16 upon the location of the basketball player on the court, the trajectory and speed of the
17 basketball 94 towards the backboard 22 will change accordingly but, in each position, the
18 perfect basketball shot will always be realized if the basketball is on a trajectory to directly
19 hit the virtual basketball rim center 88 of the virtual basketball hoop 86.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 14

1 However, since the basketball 94 has a radius 98, it is actually the exterior surface of
2 the basketball 94 and, therefore, not the basketball center 100, that engages the backboard
3 22. So, to achieve the perfect basketball backboard shot, the target bulls eye 58 and the
4 centerpoint 64 cannot be positioned at the virtual basketball rim center, but must be
5 positioned to account for the basketball center 100 of the basketball 94. A typical basketball
6 94 has a radius 98 which is approximately four and one-half inches ($4\frac{1}{2}$ "). This results in the
7 basketball center 100 being located approximately four and one-half inches ($4\frac{1}{2}$ ") from the
8 front 30 of the backboard 22 or, in other words, located at reflection plane 158. The
9 basketball rim center 82 is then located at a new distance 160 from the reflection plane 158.
10 The new distance 160 is equal to the supporting bracket length 78 (i.e., five inches) plus the
11 radius 80 of the basketball hoop 36 (i.e., nine inches) minus the radius 98 of the basketball 94
12 (i.e., four and one-half inches) or approximately ($5" + 9" - 4\frac{1}{2}"$) which equals nine and one-
13 half inches ($9\frac{1}{2}"$). Since, under the theory explained above, the virtual basketball rim center
14 88 is required to be at the same location of the basketball rim center 82, the virtual basketball
15 rim center 88 needs to be placed at nine and one-half inches ($9\frac{1}{2}"$) behind the reflection plane
16 158. As the radius 98 is four and one-half inches ($4\frac{1}{2}"$), the virtual basketball rim center 88
17 is to be placed at a distance 90 (i.e., five inches ($5"$)) from the back 32 of the backboard 22.
18 Accordingly, in the preferred embodiment, the target bulls eye 58 and the centerpoint 64 must
19 be located at the distance 90 from the back 32 of the backboard 22. Now, when the
20 basketball player looks for the centerpoint 64 of the target bulls eye 58 and, upon isolating

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 15

1 the centerpoint 64, shoots the basketball along a trajectory C toward the centerpoint 64, the
2 basketball 94 will still engage the backboard 22 at perfect reflection point 96 and then bounce
3 off or reflect from the backboard 22 along trajectory D directly into the basketball hoop 36
4 at the basketball rim center 82 to achieve the “perfect basketball shot.”

5 While the exact dimensions of the supporting bracket 42, the basketball hoop 36, and
6 the basketball 94 are quantified, if any of these dimensions were increased or decreased, the
7 location of the target bulls eye 58 and the centerpoint 64 would correspondingly likewise
8 increase or decrease in accordance with the theories of Applicant’s invention to maintain the
9 perfect basketball shot.

10 Figures 4-6 further illustrate different views of the basketball 94 engaging the perfect
11 reflection point 96 on the backboard 22 to enter the basketball rim 38 at the basketball rim
12 center 82 to achieve the perfect basketball shot. In each instance, to obtain the perfect
13 reflection point 96 and achieve the perfect basketball shot, the basketball 94 must be on a
14 trajectory 102 to hit the centerpoint 64 (Figure 6) of the target bulls eye 58. The trajectory
15 102 is any path that the basketball 94 takes to hit the centerpoint 64. Accordingly, from any
16 position on the basketball court (not illustrated), the basketball player may use an infinite
17 number of different trajectories 102 that would hit the centerpoint 64 with the basketball 94.
18 For each different trajectory 102, there will be a different perfect reflection point 96 on the
19 backboard 22 corresponding to the angle of incidence and the angle of reflection to produce
20 the perfect basketball shot.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 16

1 In an alternate or second embodiment, if the backboard 22 is not adaptable to the
2 target bulls eye 58 described above, a reflective alternate embodiment described in Figures
3 7-11 may be used. Referring to Figure 7, an L-shaped member 104 is affixed to the bracket
4 side 46a of the supporting bracket 42. In the preferred embodiment, the supporting bracket
5 42 and the panel 54 are made of a reflective material such as a mirror. Alternatively, the
6 supporting bracket 42 and the panel 54 may be made of chrome or any other type of material
7 provided that the material has a reflective surface. In this manner and depending upon the
8 location of the basketball player on the court, the L-shaped member 104 reflects off either the
9 supporting bracket 42 or the panel 54 to produce a reflective target bulls eye 106 which is
10 used to achieve the perfect basketball shot in exactly the same manner as the target bulls eye
11 58 in the original embodiment. The reflective target bulls eye 106 is the image from the L-
12 shaped member 104 that is reflected into bracket side 46b of the supporting bracket 42 and/or
13 the panel 54 to produce an actual reflection in the supporting bracket 42 and/or the panel 54
14 which is referred to as and located at the reflective target bulls eye 106. The reflective target
15 bulls eye 106 is more fully illustrated in Figure 8.

16 In Figure 8, the L-shaped member 104 is preferably made of transparent plastic. The
17 L-shaped member 104 has three sides: a member top 112, a member front 114, and a member
18 back 116. In the preferred embodiment, the member top 112 is situated at a ninety degree
19 (90°) angle with respect to the member back 116 and the member front 114 is situated at a
20 forty-five degree (45°) angle with respect to the member top 112 and the member back 116.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 17

1 Alternatively, the L-shaped member 104 does not need the member front 114 to produce the
2 reflective target bulls eye 106 as the aspects of this embodiment only require the combination
3 of the member top 112 and the member back 116. The member front 114 is useful for
4 stability and for placing the L-shaped member 104 in position on the supporting bracket 42
5 as described in Figure 10. The member top 112 is a flat surface which has a member top
6 exterior side 162 that is affixed to the bracket side 46a of the supporting bracket 42 (Figure
7 11) and a member top interior side 164 that faces toward the basketball court. The member
8 top interior side 164 of the member top 112 is divided into three sections 118, 120, and 122
9 (Figure 9). Sections 120 and 122 are each circles with section 120 defining an outer ring and
10 section 122 defining an inner ring located within the outer ring of section 120. In the
11 preferred embodiment, section 120 is white in color and section 122 is red in color. In this
12 manner, the contrasting color scheme between section 120 and section 122 enables the
13 basketball player to isolate section 122 and, more particularly, estimate a reflective
14 centerpoint 124 of the reflective target bulls eye 106. The reflective centerpoint 124 acts in
15 the same manner as the centerpoint 64 for the target bulls eye 58. Preferably, section 118 is
16 a color, such as blue or any other color, that does not distract from enabling the basketball
17 player to visually locate the reflective centerpoint 124 of the reflective target bulls eye 106.

18 The member back 116 is also divided into a member back exterior side 166 and a
19 member back interior side 168 that faces the bracket side 46b of the supporting bracket 42.
20 In the preferred embodiment, the member back exterior side 166 of the member back 116 is

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 18

1 the same orange color as the basketball rim 38. The reason that the member back exterior
2 side 166 is the same color as the basketball rim 38 is to camouflage the L-shaped member 104
3 from the basketball players and, thereby, prevent the L-shaped member 104 from distracting
4 the basketball players from visually isolating the reflective target bulls eye 106. In the
5 preferred embodiment, located on the member back interior side 168 of the member back 116
6 is a mirrored surface.

7 The combination of the member top interior side 164, as illustrated in Figure 9, and
8 the mirrored surface of the member back interior side 168 coact to produce the reflected
9 image into the bracket side 46a of the supporting bracket and/or the panel 54. The reflective
10 centerpoint 124 of section 122 of the inner circle abuts against the member back interior side
11 168 of the member back 116. In the preferred embodiment, section 122 of the inner circle
12 is a half circle. Section 120 of the outer circle and section 118 are correspondingly aligned
13 with the member back interior side 168 of the member back 116. In use, the half circle
14 created by section 122 and abutted against the mirrored surface of the member back 116
15 reflects the image of an entire circle as the mirrored surface produces the other half of the
16 circle in the reflection. The remaining sections 120 and 118 are likewise reflected along with
17 the section 122. This combined image from the L-shaped member 104 is reflected into the
18 bracket side 46b of the supporting bracket 42 and the panel 54. As the bracket side 46a and
19 the panel 54 are reflective surfaces, the image is received and displaced a depth 110 from the

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 19

1 bracket side 46b and the panel 54. This reflected image forms the reflective target bulls eye
2 106.

3 The L-shaped member 104 is located a member distance 108 from the bracket side
4 46b of the supporting bracket 42. The reflective target bulls eye 106 is displaced by the
5 supporting bracket 42 and/or the panel 54 the depth 110. In the preferred embodiment, the
6 member distance 108 is equal to the depth 110 and enables the depth 110 to be approximately
7 equal to the distance 90 (Figure 3) such that the reflective target bulls eye 106 is in the same
8 location as the target bulls eye 58. As the reflective target bulls eye 106 is in the same
9 location as the target bulls eye 58, the reflective target bulls eye 106 and the reflective
10 centerpoint 124 can then be used, in the same manner as the original embodiment, to achieve
11 the same perfect basketball shot.

12 Referring to Figure 9, the member top 112 of the L-shaped member 104 is more
13 clearly illustrated. The inner circle of section 122 has an inner diameter 126 and the outer
14 circle of section 120 has an outer diameter 128. Preferably, the inner diameter 126 is
15 approximately one half of an inch (0.5") and the outer diameter 128 is approximately one inch
16 (1.0"). In the preferred embodiment, the inner diameter 126 of section 122 and the outer
17 diameter 128 of section 120 are of sufficient diameter for the reflective target bulls eye 106
18 to be visible by the basketball player from any location on the basketball court. The L-shaped
19 member 104 has a member length 130 which is also the same length of section 118. In the
20 preferred embodiment, the member length 130 is approximately two inches (2.0").

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus

INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer

PAGE : 20

1 Alternatively, section 118 may be removed and the member length 130 may be equal to the
2 outer diameter 128 of section 120 provided the reflective target bulls eye 106 and the
3 reflective centerpoint 124 continue to be visible by the basketball player from any location on
4 the basketball court.

5 Referring to Figure 10, the L-shaped member 104 is affixed into position on bracket
6 side 46a of the supporting bracket 42 or, in other words, at member distance 108, using a
7 guide template 132. The guide template 132 consists of a wedge 134, an arm 136, and a
8 column 138. The wedge 134 and the arm 136 are affixed perpendicular to one another to
9 form a T-shaped bracket. The wedge 134 has an inset 140 to receive bracket side 46b of
10 bracket 42 to secure the guide template 132 to the supporting bracket 42. The arm 136
11 extends outwardly from the wedge 134 an arm distance 142. At the end of the arm 136 is
12 located a shoulder 144. The column 138 is situated at the end of and perpendicular to the
13 arm 136 abutting against the shoulder 144. The column 138 has a channel 146 to enable the
14 column 138 to move in the direction of Arrow A to place the L-shaped member 104 into
15 position. The column 138 contains a ledge 148 to receive and hold the L-shaped member 104
16 in proper alignment as the column 138 is moved toward the supporting bracket 42 to attach
17 the L-shaped member 104 to the bracket side 46a. Once the column 138 reaches the
18 supporting bracket 42, the L-shaped member 104 is adhered to the bracket side 46a of the
19 supporting bracket 42 and the guide template 132 is removed.

UNITED STATES DIVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION
INVENTION : Sharp Shooter Basketball Apparatus
INVENTOR : Gregory P. Spencer
PAGE : 21

1 Any means is contemplated to adhere the L-shaped member 104 to the supporting
2 bracket 42. In the preferred embodiment and as illustrated in Figure 11, the member top
3 exterior side 162 of the member top 112 contains layers 150 and 152. In the preferred
4 embodiment, layer 150 is a sticky substance or bonding agent such as an adhesive and layer
5 152 is a different sticky substance or bonding agent such as glue. Also, in the preferred
6 embodiment, the sticky substance or bonding agent is clear in color to alleviate any reflection
7 of the sticky substance or bonding agent from being reflected through the transparent plastic
8 of the L-shaped member 104 and disrupt the reflective target bulls eye 106. Alternatively, any
9 type of sticky substance or bonding agent is acceptable provided that the sticky substance or
10 bonding agent adheres to the supporting bracket 42 and secures the L-shaped member 104
11 into the proper position. The L-shaped member 104 may also be made of any type of material
12 provided the material adheres to the sticky substance or bonding agent.

13 Thus, there has been provided a basketball apparatus that teaches basketball players
14 to improve their shooting accuracy using the target bulls eye or reflective target bulls eye
15 when shooting backboard shots from any location on the basketball court. While the
16 invention has been described in conjunction with a specific embodiment, it is evident that
17 many alternatives, modifications and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art in
18 light of the foregoing description. Accordingly, it is intended to embrace all such alternatives,
19 modifications and variations as fall within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.